

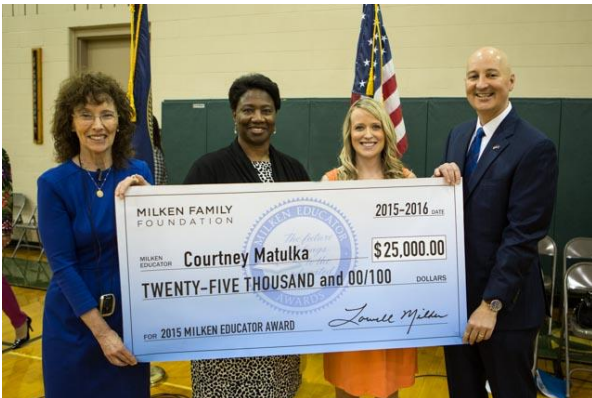


NEWS RELEASE

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NEBRASKA TEACHER SURPRISED WHEN SHE WINS \$25,000, MILKEN EDUCATOR AWARD DURING SCHOOL ASSEMBLY



Science teacher Courtney Matulka walked out of an all school assembly at Beadle Middle School today with a prestigious national educator award and \$25,000 richer.

Matulka was presented the 2015-2016 Milken Educator Award.

The 8th grade science teacher at Millard Public Schools was surrounded by her students and other Beadle Middle School students when Gov. Pete Ricketts, Nebraska Education Deputy Commissioner Dr. Deborah Frison and Milken Educator Awards Senior Vice President Jane Foley presented the national educator award to her.

Frison applauded Matulka's outstanding leadership and teaching skills as well as her ability to set high learning expectations for her students while connecting with them.

"Courtney has demonstrated character, commitment and ethics as a Beadle Middle School teacher, providing a strong role model for her students while steadily increasing the number of her students exceeding state standards and steadily reducing the number below proficient. Her content and instructional knowledge is admirable as well as her commitment to professional development," Frison said.

In class, Matulka promotes active student participation and establishes a learning environment to ensure that her students not only learn, but excel.

"Ms. Matulka is a great example of the kind of leadership that has made Nebraska's education system one of the best in the country," Gov. Ricketts said. "Her energy and creativity has helped lead her students to higher standards of excellence, and she is well deserving of this prestigious award."

"In her seven years as an educator, Courtney has demonstrated outstanding instructional and leadership ability," said Foley. "She is dedicated to her craft and profession and values education and what it provides for the individual students

as well as the community in general. She demonstrates the ability to hold students to the highest expectations. We look forward to Courtney's contributions to the Milken Educator Network."

An example of Matulka's exemplary educational accomplishments includes her role in the Millard school district piloting and then adopting the Co-teaching in Student Teaching model. The pilot was so positive that the school district uses only the co-teaching model with their student teachers.

Matulka has served on multiple building and district committees on science and instruction. She frequently is asked to lead district committees and is an active district leader and presenter.

Matulka has been teaching since 2009 at Millard Public Schools and has served as Beadle Middle School Science Department Head since 2011. She graduated from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 2008 with a Bachelor of Science in Education and with a Masters in Secondary Education in 2010.

For the next six months, in up to 40 schools around the U.S., outstanding middle and high school educators will receive the Milken Educator Award and an unrestricted cash prize of \$25,000 before cheering students, respected colleagues, distinguished officials and the media during a surprise school assembly.

The Milken Educator Awards, which was launched by the Milken Family Foundation in 1987, has been described as "the Oscars of teaching" by Teacher magazine. Recipients are selected in early to mid-career for what they have achieved and for the promise of what they will accomplish. Many have gone on to earn advanced degrees and be placed in prominent posts and on state and national education committees.

Alternating yearly between elementary and secondary educators, the Milken Awards are sourced through each participating state department of education, which appoints an independent blue ribbon committee to confidentially review candidates for recommendation to MFF.

This year, MFF is launching #MyTeacherRocks Instagram campaign that encourages students to take selfies with their favorite teacher and describe in the caption why their teacher is special. To enter the contest, entrants are asked to follow @MilkenFamilyFdn on Instagram, post their selfie to their individual account and use the #MyTeacherRocks and #MilkenAward hashtags. The three photos with the most "likes" will be selected in November 2015, and February and April 2016.

To get regular updates on the surprise Milken Educator Award events, follow and use the #MilkenAward hashtag on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

For more information about the Milken Educator Awards, visit www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org or call MFF at (310) 570-4772.

The Milken Educator Awards tour is on social media at:

<https://instagram.com/milkenfamilyfdn>

www.facebook.com/milkeneducatorawards

www.twitter.com/milken

www.youtube.com/milkenaward

The Milken Educator Awards, created by the Milken Family Foundation, were launched in 1987. The Awards provide public recognition and individual financial rewards of \$25,000 to elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and specialists from around the country who are furthering excellence in education. Recipients are heralded in early to mid-career for what they have achieved and for the promise of what they will accomplish.